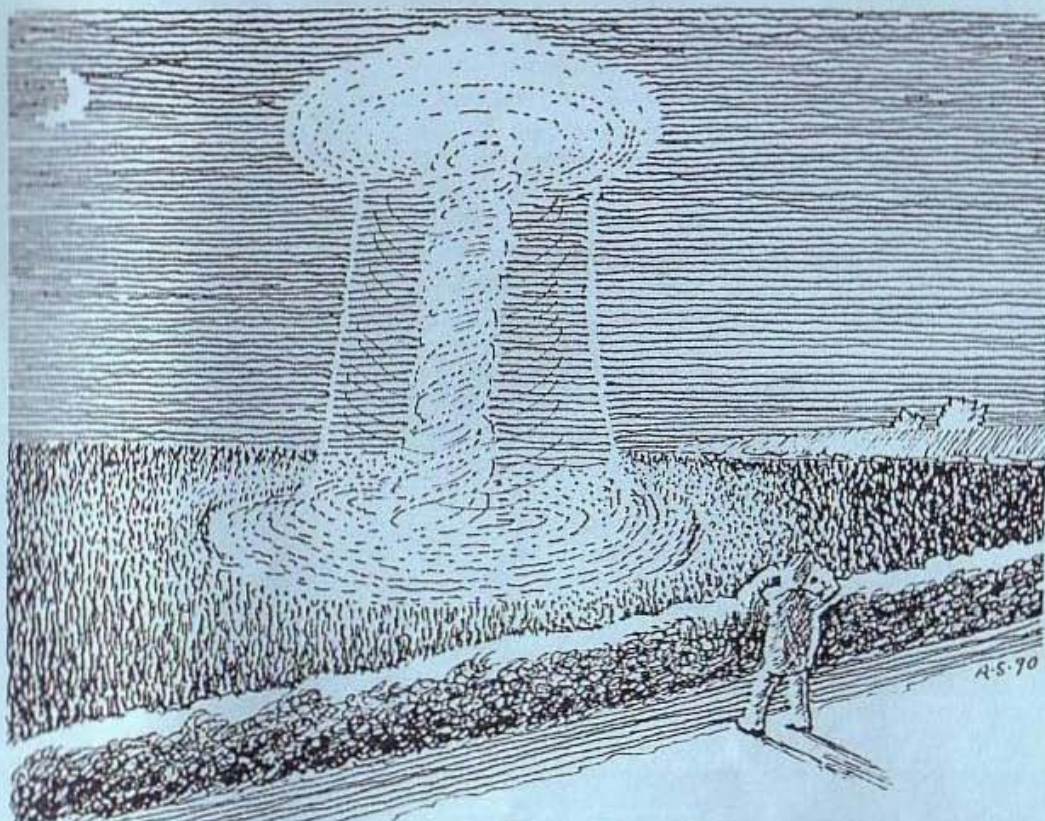


NORTHERN UFO NEWS

148
APRIL
1991



All the news, views and up to date cases £6 for six
Editor: Jenny Randles Cover: Roy Sandbach

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37 HEATHBANK ROAD CHEADLE HEATH STOCKPORT CHESHIRE ENGLAND SK3 0UP

J. R. Comments An issue which has come to the fore since the last NUN is that of witness protection. Just what do we owe these people in return for sharing with us their inner secrets of a close encounter?

An awkward situation has arisen in the wake of Nigel Watson's book *Portraits of Alien Encounters*. He has published this himself but the 192 pp hardback retailing at £12, post inclusive (from Valis Books 52A Lascotts Rd London N22 4JN), is produced in such a style that you would never dream it does not emerge from a major professional company. In fact it is better quality than many books lining bookstores from the big names.

Generally speaking *Portraits* is an excellent work. Nigel is I believe - although someone out there will doubtless correct me - the only present subscriber to Northern UFO News who was one of the founders of the NUFON alliance way back in March 1974. However, he has not really been involved in the field for the past ten years (save for the occasional article; eg a column in Fortean Times, or as an observer via reading NUN and others).

During the latter half of the seventies he did fascinating pioneer work in the blossoming new UFOlogy that Britain was then creating out of the ashes of the ETH. He wrote for the forerunner of *Magonia* with articles that are best described as witness profiles. They were not case histories as such, since they focused more on the psychodynamics of the witnesses involved in unusual close encounters - the type where UFOlogy overlaps into clairvoyance and which became known as the 'psychic contactees'.

Many of these were Nigel's personal investigations and formed a backbone of NUFON and UFOIN case files for a time. In fact he wrote '*Portraits*' about the time he took a backseat in UFOlogy (around 1980/1981) and it was primarily a collection of his witness profile articles from *Magonia* - these also being very 'northern' in flavour, as at the time he lived on Humberside. I believe he tried to market the book commercially then, but failed, as this is hardly a commercial book - being of deep fascination to the hard core of UFOlogists who KNOW the ins and outs of our subject but lacking the ET spaceships philosophy needed to sell it to the Daily Star or those who read UFO books for their pure entertainment value.

He has presumably decided to resurrect it a decade later now that he is in a secure career and when self-publishing has reached such a fine art that more and more people are shunning 'real' publishers and doing it for themselves (see, for instance, Andy Collins excellent paranormal investigation books). Indeed, for the UFO movement this is in many ways a good thing as it gives access to material far superior to many potboilers that some publishers seem to think are all they can finance. Yet the quality offers a product that would look at home in anyones display cabinet.

I have to say I enjoyed much of this book, possibly because I had lived through the era and it reminded me of things I had forgotten. Lessons, in fact, that are well worth re-learning for any investigator today. As for their impact on younger UFO researchers to whom most of this book will be entirely new I do not know. But I would like to think that we have become sophisticated enough with the years that this book will make people think about the subjective role of close encounters, as it is designed to do.

However, having said all of this, an attendant dilemma has emerged from Nigel's book which I doubt he anticipated when he chose to finally bring it into fruition but which is an important consequence. This was the effect it might have on the people he was writing about - who have, in some cases, moved on a long way from the people they were back in the seventies.

This is a factor that few - if any - writers stop to think about. And I do not just mean book writers (including myself). If you have ever written up one of your cases for a UFO magazine it is something you should now consider as well, but almost certainly have not contemplated.

Just exactly how much consideration do we owe those people who share their UFO adventures with us? Perhaps one of the most positive things Whitley Strieber brought to the fore is the need to judge this question which until very recently most of us never even posed, let alone answered.

The point is that if we investigate a case now and put it into our mental store and in the year 2011 decide to write our 'memoirs of a UFOlogist' tome so as to supplement the pension - doubtless we would chose to refer back to classic cases we have known. However, it will be easy to forget that these cases are not just files we filed into a cabinet or abstract reports on lights in the sky made by nobody in particular, they are incidents - perhaps traumatic incidents - in the lives of real people.

These people may have come to us with many different motives in mind; to find the truth about UFOs, for us to prove they were not going mad, to persuade us and then the world that the aliens are coming, or just to unburden themselves of a demon that their friends and family could not accept quite as readily as we could. Yet how will that have changed years from now? Will these people still feel the same about their encounter? Perhaps their lives have altered drastically and they would not relish suddenly being thrust into the limelight once more.

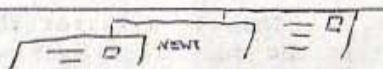
In the case of Nigel's book there is one case he did not investigate (but commented about based on published reports in the UFO literature and general conversations he seems to have had with some of those involved when the events were ongoing). He has evaluated it in his own style - as, of course, is his right and as many of us would doubtless do under similar circumstances. Yet he may have innocently forgotten two things - the line between legitimate discussion of events and introspective analysis which might call into question the integrity or sanity of a human being in the eyes of other people, especially those unfamiliar with UFO reality - and AS witnesses are younger when past events occur, that they may have grown up in such a way that these are experiences they would prefer to leave buried. When we go public it is easy to ignore this, but have we the right?

Of course, this is not something unique to Nigel. All writers do it. I have done it myself often enough and it is hard not to. Most times it works out alright as our books are read only by those 'in the know' and witnesses can generally live with that sharing of the truth within a smallish inner club. But, how many of us would think to check back with witnesses of a case investigated 15 years ago (assuming this was possible) before choosing to debate it in the UFO records? Don't we all bandy star witness names like Hill, Arnold, Godfrey, around when we talk about our subject?

In some senses you might claim this is fair. Once a witness is in the public domain (via books or tabloid stories) it is acceptable to debate what they have said. Could UFOlogy work without that ability? True, but I wonder if we have other things to take into account. After all, can we really KNOW what they still want?

Maybe the answer is one I am using increasingly in this magazine - the adoption of widespread pseudonyms or just letters (often unrelated to real names, incidentally). Actual witness names maybe should never be brought into the open at all - not by us. We might be attacked by sceptics for offering uncheckable facts, but don't witnesses deserve this from us? We cannot blame Nigel Watson's for this. It is an issue we ALL have to consider.

NEWS ROUND UP:



:: My thanks to reader Haydn Brearley for bringing news on a story you may recall from the recent past where press reports alleged British Snail (er Rail) was developing a UFO look-alike revolutionary propulsion system for its slow-speed trains. I guess the idea was to go fast enough that they might get there on the scheduled day, at least. Anyhow, Haydn chased it up and the word from Neil Johnson of the information services at BRs Derby development plant is this; 'the story was in fact a hoax and had no foundation whatsoever.' BR apparently issued a statement at the time which few media sources carried denying that they were planning a nuclear powered train with its attendant fear of radiation leaks. In my view this was just an above top secret plan to find a way of finally offering hot coffee.

:: News from the groups is that BUFORA Ireland has been created by Anne Griffin and Pat Delaney and will be pleased to correspond with anyone about Irish cases. They ask that you address ALL correspondence via their new box number and will 'not entertain any queries that do not'. This address is:- BUFORA Ireland PO BOX 3070 Whitehall Dublin 9 Eire

Meanwhile in Scotland Ken Higgins at SRUFO informs of latest happenings. They plan a research trip late April to Blairgowrie, site of much recent weird activity as reported in the press. It is also pleasing to see a large degree of cooperation between SRUFO and SPI, with joint membership listings and a pooling of library data bases. Well done. A fine example to others. The next meeting (to which any NUN readers are invited) will take place at the Mid Calder Inn (Tap Shop), restaurant lounge bar, Mid Calder High Street on Monday 29 April 1991 (call 0426-970023 for timings). SPI and SRUFO are also planning a Scottish UFO conference in Edinburgh and have set aside the date of 12 October 1991 for this. More details when available (and of course on UFO CALL, if you stay tuned to 0898 - 12 18 86)...but why not plan a weekend break in this beautiful city to coincide?

:: If you really feel like being the Euro traveller the week before the above a huge international conference is being planned for 3 - 6 October 1991 in Belgium, scene of the great UFO waves of flying triangles in 1989 and 1990. I understand both Jacques Vallee and Richard Haines from the USA will be lecturing with many others and needless to say I will keep you posted on details as soon as they are available (as again will UFO CALL).

:: Finally, some TV news. I gather that the 13 part mega-series 'The Unexplained' (including a one hour UFO special hosted by David Frost), due to be screened in the UK and USA this summer has been postponed because of the uncertainty over the future of TV franchises. But it will resurface in future, hopefully. In its place, Granada TV, who can always be relied upon to offer unbiased, objective and serious features on the paranormal will screen to the whole country 'James Randi Investigates', a six-part series of 30 minute shows in which the famous American magician turned CSICOP demystifier of things supernatural will present research into such effects as dowsing, astrology, new age beliefs, mediums and channeling. UFO related topics do NOT feature, as I understand it - an, er, disappointment. Present plans are to launch the series on 17 July at 9 pm, but watch your TV listings around that date just in case. Although my comments about Granada TV above were written on 1 April the series itself ought to be well worth a look.

UFOLOGISTS ARE WITTY: - ITS OFFICIAL!

Thanks to all those readers who entered last issues competition to invent a daft headline for a fictional newspaper story. The prize was a copy of the first three issues of UFO Newsfile - BUFORAs latest venture edited by Michael Hudson, which is a digest of media stories on the UFO subject as received via the cuttings agency.

There were some excellent entries. So much so that I can't choose between the final four. So I am asking you to vote. The one with the most votes by May 1st will get the issues - so let me know your winner.

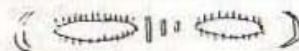
'Randles Scandal!: Revealed- Top UFOlogist heads government cover-up'
(Juliet McKinver, Yorkshire) (Should it qualify being so near the truth?)

'Corn Circle Hoax - Jolly Green Giant claims responsibility'
(Bob Brand, Yorkshire)

'Crop circle investigators bothered by ringing in the ears'
(Gerry Lovell, Somerset)

'Aliens turned my Olive into a son' (Joe Dormer, Lancashire)

Well done to all. Those of you who didn't enter can still subscribe to UFO Newsfile for £6 for 6 (£5 only if a BUFORA member) from: - 16 South Way Burgess Hill Sussex RH15 9ST.

CIRCULAR LOGIC


Despite the winter weather cereologists (officially now renamed as cerealogists by the way!) never sleep.

First came stories referring to Terence Meaden and Professor Kikuchi, one of the Japanese University researchers studying circles in the lab. These brought dust into the equation. Apparently, this is sucked into the vortex 'the dust becomes electrically charged and is spat out, flattening the crops and forming the patterns' (Meaden in Swindon Advertiser, 5 Feb). It seems that experiments creating vortices have successfully reproduced a lab quintuplet - 'by shooting one vortex downwards, it hit the ground and burst into five' But did this occur repeatedly or was it a one-off?

Meanwhile the Glasgow Herald on 14 Feb offered 'uncanny news for the Earl of Haddington', which they claimed was impressed by a circle formation last summer at Leetside Farm near Duns. It was 'comic' not 'cosmic'. The three hoaxers (using the pseudonym Captain Kirk!) explained exactly how they did it... using a 16 ft wooden batten, a 3 ft steel pin and a few pints! They entered the field via tramlines with relatively little care, as 'its hard to knock the stalks over since farmers started using stuff to make it stand up'. Then they drove in the pin (leaving only a tiny hole) put this on the hole in centre of the batten and walked gently through the wheat letting the batten do the talking. A 16 foot circle resulted. Then they repositioned the pin, used the other hole in the batten and in minutes had a second 32 feet diameter circle - or a formation of two as they here created. Then they turned it into a pictogram with 'straight lines, linking the circles' by 'shuffling' the batten from side to side. The paper claims this Scottish circle WAS taken seriously by crop circle researchers. If true, this is strong evidence for my view. Hoaxes are now VERY common.

On 1 March The Southern Evening Echo reported that ball lightning expert Professor Ohtsuki of Waseda University (later quoted very seriously in establishment press, even the New York Times, as having successfully filmed plasma ball-lightning in the laboratory - in fact, film screened at the Oxford conference last summer) will lead a team of Japanese scientists to study the circles in the fields of Britain this year.

Professor Ohtsuki will be pleased by cereo, er cerea, logist, Lucy Pringle who, same day, predicted to the Portsmouth News that 'I think we are going to get circles of increasing complexity' this summer.

This is not exactly a candidate for the David Icke award for improbable prophecy - but then few of you following this ex-TV presenter's channeled predictions of late will expect anything to live up to his standards. For instance the Manchester Evening News (which surely prints what people really say?) claim a prediction that Hazel Grove will be destroyed by a giant insect invasion on a date this June (I withhold the exact date so as not to panic local residents unduly). Sadly this is where the bank containing all your NUN subscriptions is located. So if you get a letter from me saying, please resubscribe as your cheque was eaten by a ten foot greenfly then kindly address all complaints to you know where.

A BRITISH DREAMLAND?

As known by followers of either the recent American UFO scene or the rather bizarre TV series Twin Peaks (whichever you feel is closer to reality and credibility) - it is believed in certain quarters that there is a secret base where alien built UFOs owned and flown by joint US/UFO-naut crews can operate. There are also some who claim that aliens are disguised as humans in leading government positions (personally I think there is plenty of evidence that certain members of some recent US administrations have indeed been off this planet - well off it).

Anyhow, what about the evidence for a British Dreamland (or White Lodge as called in Twin Peaks scripts)?

You may recall some years ago the tales of tunnels leading from RAF Brawdy to - and doors opening up in the side of - Stack Rocks off the Dyfed coast. For a time this underground complex was all the rage until the facilities at Bentwaters took over following the testimony of certain 'Sky Crash' witnesses.

I am presently collecting information from a correspondant that - he says - the Stack Rocks stories were deliberate concoctions by local US airmen who dressed up in fire protection suits to play at aliens and had a great time conning UFOlogists with wild yarns. If true, this is both understandable and potentially instructive about more recent accounts.

However, meantime a correspondant from Yorkshire has offered some seemingly logical reasons for the location of British Dreamland. Apparently, his 'US contacts' assure him that a British underground UFO hangar is quite possible. Evidence fingers where else but Warrington.

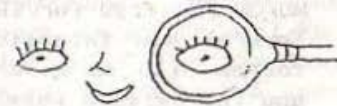
In fact the US Army base at Burtonwood is huge but is largely dismantled now. However, it remains one of the biggest stores in Europe and there are persistent tales of top secret underground complexes, officially denied. If you drive past it on the M62 the road dips suddenly at this point and signs warn of subsidence. This is supposedly caused by local mine workings and that seems very plausible to me. Of course, there could be more to it. What is undeniable is that there have been a number of strange reports associated with the area - as NUN has reported over the years.

These vary from baffling lights, beams of redness hitting locals walking dogs by the perimeter fence, strange electrical effects, poltegeist and haunting accounts and even last summer a crop circle we reported in NUN just yards from base land. That was, mind you, written off in mundane terms - or so I thought. We could play the 'what if' game, very easily I suppose.

Having lived in the area myself not so long ago, I know that the locals are convinced something fishy IS going on there. But I wonder if this is all that surprising. Underground store complexes at bases seem fair enough to me as does keeping secret the whys and the wherefores for non-alien reasons.

Nevertheless, to be on the safe side I had better write my international best-seller - 'The Alien Truth of Burtonwood', just in case.

FOR YOUR PERUSAL:



Major articles elsewhere

UFO Times Mar (six per year with BUFORA sub 103 Hove Ave London E17 7NG)
Interesting reports on UFology in Yugoslavia and Mexico plus a German study into witness perception with fascinating statistical results.

UFO Debate Feb (£8 for six, 40 Stubbing Way Shipley West Yorks BD18 2EZ)
Another collection of theoretical papers the mixture and range of which you won't find anywhere else. Sit back, enter an ASC, read, think and who knows?

SPI Feb (£7.50 for five, 14 McKinlay Crecent Alloa Scotlands FK10 3RX)
Usual collection of cases, reports on paranormal happenings from elementals to Nessie (look out for the levitating shoe story!) plus the KGB and UFOs.

Crop Watcher Jan (£7 for six, 3 Selborne Ct Tavistock Close Romsey SO51 7TY)
The only regular circle magazine publishing detailed reports on out of Wessex circles, reports on hoaxes that have been unmasked and reports of new eyewitness sightings of crop circles forming, plus reviews and news.

The Circular Mar (£6.30 for four, 58 Kings Rd West End Woking GU24 9LW)
Now on subscription (cheques to Bob Kingsley) and absorbed as the official organ of the CCCS. Remains to be seen how this will change what was excellent as an independent publication. Terrific new layout with interesting esoteric theories, detailed reports on Wessex circles but an oddly misguided article about historical crop circle data. Still good read.

The Skeptic Jan (£12 for six, PO Box 475 Manchester M60 2TH)
British CSICOP's own journal won't be your cup of tea if you hate debunkers, but if you can see the good in rational criticism well worth a look. Excellent new production and plenty of humour in its snips. Read the review of Devereux's Earthlights Revelations, compare it with some in non skeptical journals and you might see how little difference there is, why serious proponents should at least LISTEN to the sincere skeptic movement and why MUFORA is working with these skeptics on a new UFO case we'll report in a future NUN... Now hows that for a first!

Earth Mar (£5 for six, 20 Stonegate Rd Thorpe Edge Bradford BD10 0HF)
An excellent and perceptive piece on the OZ factor alongside all the usual intriguing material on earth mystery and semi-UFO related discussion. Nice.

Annals Mar (£7.50 for six, 8 St John Street Wells Somerset BA5 1SW)
Aside from the best computer graphics in any UK magazine what you'll love about this is that it has little articles, each digestable in two minutes, on a huge range of subjects - including UFOs. Mind you the rejection of all circles as hoaxes since most of last summers were (agreed!) is a bit naff.

IUR Jan (\$30 for six, 2457 West Peterson Ave Chicago Illinois 60659 USA)
A special issue entirely devoted to a mammoth and fascinating report by Jerry Clark on the birth and genesis of the airship encounters in the USA nearly 100 years ago, as reflected by the media of the day. Important stuff.

MUFON Jan (\$30 for 12, 103 Oldtowne Rd Seguin Texas 78155-4099 USA)
Several new interviews relating to the Roswell case take prominence but theres also an interview with Dr Petit, French plasma physicist, about UFOs and the Belgian wave.

Orbiter Jan (\$25 for six, 43 Harrison Street Reading MA 01867 USA)
Complete with a free colour print of a ringed circle this looks at the circles in the USA, where they are gradually invading (surprise, surprise).

BOOKS OF THE MOMENT



The UFO Encyclopedia Compiled by John Spencer Headline h/b 340pp £16.95

In 1978 in the wake of Spielberg's movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind we had a whole spate of UFO books, some awful, others not. They included two UFO encyclopedias, both American. Recently, Jerry Clark has begun to publish a three volume set which is more a review of UFOlogy from his perspective. Now, a real new encyclopedia is offered at last. It even has the same title as one of the other two (although there isn't much else you can call a UFO encyclopedia, I suppose!). This one is refreshingly different in that it is originated in Britain and credited to BUFORA on the cover.

It is true that much of its material is BUFORA originated (not to say NUFON group originated in some cases - though I couldn't find any mention of NUFON or NUN in there). However, unlike the Ron Storey encyclopedia, for instance, or even Jerry Clarks latest venture to a lesser degree, this is written entirely by its compiler, BUFORAs vice chairman, John Spencer. However, it does lean heavily on other peoples published work as the author acknowledges in the introduction. For instance, it seems that nearly every British case listed in 'Abduction' is precised in here.

Now I don't have a problem with that. As UFOlogists my view is that we produce our work for the use of others. However, I do have a bit of a thing about crediting investigators. This is something I always try to do. Yet it is noticably absent from this book, where almost every case summary seems to contain little if any reference to the many investigators without whom these cases would not now be part of the UFO data base. Perhaps this is me being over-sensitive, and it is hardly critical to the value of the book, but it is something that I would have hoped a responsible, experienced and excellent UFOlogist - such as John Spencer - might have avoided.

More seriously, I am somewhat bemused by the usability problems of the book. As an encyclopedia one assumes that we are not meant to read it in the normal way from page 1 to 340; although it is literate enough to allow that.

My point here is that an encyclopedia should presumably be a reference tool to look up data as and when you need it. Again this just might be me but I found it extremely hard to do with the format chosen for this book.

Here are the contents of a typical double page spread, picked at random; Broadlands, Bronk, Detlev, Brooke, Angela, Brooks, JBW, Brooks, Overton, Brostrom, Hardy, Brown, Lt Frank, Brown, Dr Harold, Brown, Thomas Townsend...all listed with a few lines of text each. Indeed, in some respects, this might be better called a dictionary than a full encyclopedia.

Now I don't know about you but most of these section headings meant little to me. Once you read the potted report you find the relevance, but how do you use an encyclopedia when many headings at first seem unfathomable?

I believe one major problem is that, with exceptions, a lot of the headings are peoples names and there is not enough cross referral. For instance, look under L for landing cases (nothing), P or T for physical traces (nothing), V for Vehicle interference IS there, but no cases are sub-refered; although presumably there ARE car stop cases in the book. How do you find them? Well - I know (since the cases from Abduction are in here) that there have to be several - but where? To find them you sometimes should look under the place where they occurred (far more helpful) but, sadly, much more often you have to know the surnames of the witnesses to find them! This is not something even the investigators of the case are likely to remember just like that - I took a while finding some of my own cases for that reason. For most other readers it means trial and error, since how else will they know what cases listed under Lowry, Billy or Taylor, Sandra are?

Lest I create an impression that this is not a worthwhile book, let me stress that it is full of interesting information. It also has the admirable merits of being objective, up to date and lucid. But I seriously suggest that if it is reprinted as a paperback deep consideration be given to its format, which for me is just not user friendly.

Given that the book can hardly be rewritten, what can be done? Actually all that it needs is a comprehensive index added at the end. This should list all topic headings such as those mentioned in this review, eg case types, plus cases per country (ie England, sightings in...) and cross refer all witnesses to place names of locations, since with many sightings it could be easier to find data this way. Three or four pages of such a cross referred index would transform the usefulness of this volume in my opinion.

FIRE IN THE SKY PUT OUT?

The famous movie film taken by Peter Day at Cuddington in Buckinghamshire in January 1973 may finally have been resolved.

Readers will know that this has featured on many TV programmes and the cover of my book UFO Reality. Also that in 1989 BUFORA issued a case history - 'Fire in the Sky' - revealing the results found in its massive case file. The conclusion to this was that the crash of an American F-111 jet some 40 minutes after the UFO was seen and the film taken was probably related. It was speculated that the aircrafts steering failure might have been triggered by contact with an atmospheric phenomenon, also filmed as the UFO, or that the film depicts aviation fuel ejected by the F-111 at the time of initial crisis in an effort to minimise fire risk. It seems that Stuart Campbell, with the aid of CAUS in the USA and the Freedom of Information Act, has secured the accident report which supports the latter theory. Some questions remain. Stuart will publish a report soon. More news when he does.

UPDATE: I should add that Peter Day himself tells me he is so unimpressed by the Steuart Campbell solution (which Steuart sent to him) that he has contacted the photographic journal to give his side of the story before they commit to debunking the case through Campbell's article. This debate is likely to simmer for some time yet - more news next issue, I expect!

HAVE YOU GOT A SIXTH SENSE?

By this I mean a copy of my book 'Sixth Sense', published by Robert Hale in January 1988. The 240 page hardback was never released in paperback and in a limited Salem House run in the USA. It looks at the five human senses and what science has recently learnt about their limits, analyses the question of altered states of consciousness in relation to the paranormal, the Oz factor and Quasi-conscious experience in greater detail than any of my other books to date. Whilst not strictly a UFO book (it is a book about the mind, perception and unusual experience) it has UFO content and, of course, is directly relevant in many cases. I have managed to procure some of the last copies from the warehouse (it will not be reprinted). In stores it sells for £10 but I can offer a copy to readers for £5, post inclusive, in mint condition, of course. US readers can also obtain copies by sending FIVE OR TEN DOLLAR BILLS ONLY at the following rate: - \$10 (surface mail) or \$15 (air mail)...Look out for more such bargains in future, as I receive a lot of requests for some of my books that are harder to obtain.

MEDIA MATTERS

A look at UFOs in the public eye

((()))



The Daily Star featured UFOs a lot recently. On 20 March they showed how keen they must have been for a story by including a picture of actor Jack Lord, star of Hawaii 5-0, seemingly just to allow them to use the headline Hawaii UF-0. The colour photo taken by a man on holiday on Maui shows a very faint white/grey blur in the sky. An East Anglia UFO group are quoted as endorsing the picture as a UFO. Tim Good could give no answer. But the crucial thing to me is that the photographer saw nothing when taking the snap. Frankly, it looks exactly like several photographs I developed by accident during training in my media communications course. Slight creases in the negative can produce this UFO-like effect on the print. Try it.

Needless to say, the Star were far more impressed than me. Next day Chris Tarrant was depicted holding up the newspaper with the heading 'You Folks Go UFO Bananas'. It seems the Capital Radio DJ and everybody's favourite TV personality (well somebody's favourite) - well anyway - Chris Tarrant has himself seen a 'shining light over Salisbury Plain'. One of the many helicopters or flares used in military exercises there? Nope. He reports; 'I'm sure it was a spaceship'. He did a straw poll of his listeners and all but one believed in aliens. They apparently don't miss his show, so that may not exactly be a major shock, I guess. Anyhow, the Star say that bookies reported they were taking five times as many bets as usual on the reality of UFOs after they broke this 'sensational picture'. It was now described as showing 'an orange spaceship with two white lights', bearing little resemblance to the colour picture reproduced in the edition I saw.

Already one photographic case has come our way of an undeniable lens flare. The witness THOUGHT it was a lens flare - but then she read the Star and after seeing how UFOlogists interpreted that...well...Enough said!

Over on the Lancashire coast the Fylde group has 'cast off its crackpot image' the West Lancashire Evening Gazette report (18 Feb). Actually, they refer to the groups rejection of the flying saucer theory in favour of a paranormal overlap and image hypothesis. Joe Dormer is quoted as saying; 'I believe that many UFO sightings are similar to the ghost experience when people think they have seen an apparition although it was probably an hallucination.' As for the cause - Joe cites the Meadon (sic) vortex - which the paper reports 'may sound like a new brand of toilet cleaner' - but which is then elaborated upon in some detail. The generally excellent article notes that this 'sounds like pie in the sky but the group...are all down to earth characters.'

After a quiet spell the Sunday Sport returned (10 Mar) with 'UFO boffins uncover alien sex attack link'. Supposedly a serious (well, you know what I mean) report on Dr Kenneth Ring's research into the link between near death experience and UFO abductions and the finding of a pattern of childhood abuse in the lives of some witnesses, it leads the paper to cite their famous case of a woman who 'had her nickers stolen by a gay space alien' and claim a recent UFO movie is based on real studies of the hundreds of people 'abused by gangs of blue coloured dwarfs led by tall matchstick men'. I must have missed that bit - or all these cases - when writing Abduction. I duly apologise for not being as informed as the Sport.

Finally, let us all pray. By which I mean we owe a big thank you to our old friends the Aetherius Society. According to the Hammersmith Guardian (7 Mar) they inform that the Gulf War's short duration, hostage release and low casualty count was down to praying. As Dr Richard Lawrence said; 'It is not just a matter of putting your hands together...the power of prayer is a tremendous cosmic force, the amount of energy it presents can change the world.' A problem I perceive here is how come the Iraqi freedom fighters or the thousands of their troops killed during the war did not count when this prayer power had its impact? Is it because the aliens, who you recall are an integral part of such prayer channeling, are on President Bush's side?

If so, I take back all I said about David Icke's prophecies of doom.

THE MYSTERY OF THE SNOW DOMES:

Thanks to reader Zena Williams from Humberside for bringing to light the puzzle of the 'hollow snowballs' reported by the Hull Daily Mail (15 Feb). During the mini-freeze the week before 'giant hollow domes of snow' appeared over a couple of miles of coast from Withernsea to Easington. At Weeton hundreds appeared in one big field in just a few days. The man who found them reports the objects (varying from tennis to soccer ball size) are hollow underneath and 'look as if they have just landed'. He added; 'it looks like a variation on the crop circles' (whatever next!)

The phenomenon was allegedly wind born and 'restricted, as far as I can make out, to about two miles (from) the sea'. The speaker here was the publicity officer for South Holderness Countryside Society, the delightfully appropriate Mr Howard Frost. Can any of our meteorological readers help?

BRIEF CASES

Some current investigations



On about 18 or 19 March 1991 a close encounter occurred in China. I thank Ken Phillips for providing the original Reuters release (timed 10.30 on 20 March). This reports that a Chinese domestic flight was flying over Shanghai when the incident occurred. Many passengers witnessed an oval object larger than the aircraft which pursued the plane for 9 minutes. When above the airport it suddenly turned course and vanished. More news on this if we get it.

CASE 8757 29 October 1987 Blackpool, Lancs FUFOIG Joe Dormer A3-5

A British Telecom engineer and keen birdwatcher parked his car outside his home on the South Shore at 12.10 (daylight). He grabbed his binoculars to watch some geese flying SE into wind when he saw a strange object ABOVE them. This was grey, box-like but with irregularities travelling in a constant speed and direction (E towards Peel Corner). After watching for 20 seconds he focused back on the geese. When he tried to find the UFO again he was unable to do so.

CASE 9028 26 March 1990 Edinburgh, Scotland BUFORA C1-5

Housewife watching television at 19.05 glanced out of window as green ball of light shot across sky in the NE. Visible few seconds at most. Surely a fireball meteor.

CASE 9030 12 August 1990 Widnes, Cheshire MUFORA Peter Hough D2-5

At 21.00 boy and girlfriend saw two 'objects' in sky - one silver, one red. After few moments one flew off but red one hovered for several seconds before flying off to follow the other. Could have been light aircraft, but witnesses failed to cooperate with an investigation so case aborted.

CASE 9026 17 November 1990 Warrington, Cheshire MUFORA B2-5

A man watching aircraft at 15.30 from the Penketh area saw a circular object which caught his attention. Through binoculars it seemed to have a slight dome. It moved like an aircraft from north to south and disappeared. He thought it was a plane of some sort at first. Given the proximity and direction of Liverpool Airport this judgement seems apt.

CASE 9033 24 November 1990 Horwich, Lancashire MUFORA Peter Hough B3-6

Mrs W was passenger in car on M61. Husband driving saw nothing. At 23.00 in vicinity of Horwich the road travels at some height looking down on the town. Over houses in the NE she saw a mass of orange fire which looked to move and pulsate. Watched it for about a minute until line of travel took it from view. When first reported thought it a UFO in the sky, now concluded it was probably a grass fire on the hillside.

CASE 9034 9 December 1990 Pilling, Lancashire MUFORA Colleen Innes A3-6

Farmer and garage worker saw triangular mass with red light on apex. It tilted on edge and drifted out towards the coast. Coastguard revealed they did release a balloon and given prevailing winds at the time could have passed over the area of the sighting. Balloon was seen at Cockersands.

CASE 9101 2 January 1991 Blackpool, Lancashire MUFORA Colleen Innes B2-7

Four witnesses in a car at 16.15 saw three dark objects against sky travelling SE to NW and one other flying due S. After checking with Blackpool Air Traffic Control it was confirmed to MUFORA these were low flying military aircraft. Considerable training activity occurred in the area in the build up to the Gulf War.

CASE 9102 15 January 1991 Henbury, Macclesfield, Cheshire MUFORA B1-5

A woman walking her dog saw a green light in the sky which she took to be an aircraft. However, it then fell suddenly from the air looking like a ball of flame, still green in colour. Visible for just 2 seconds in total. Reported via Jodrell Bank and evaluated as a fireball meteor.

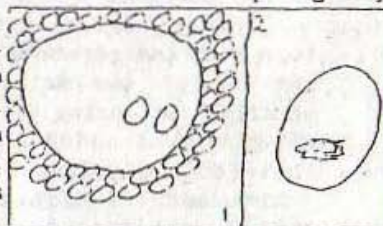
A HOLE IN THE SKY

Case 9103 18 March 1991 Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs MUFORA B4-6

In CROP CIRCLES there are references to a couple of 'hole in the cloud' cases, where it is speculated that ionization (eg from a Meaden vortex) might cause clouds to separate for a time and produce the effect that is noted. Here is an interesting new case in the same line. Hopefully one of our meteorologist readers can comment on this latest example.

The incident began at 06.30 on the above date. Mr G was walking in local fields to observe post-dawn wildlife. It was a beautiful spring day with the sun having risen some 30 minutes before.

The sky was covered by mackerel type clouds but at one point a most unusual and perfect roundish hole had formed. It was several times the sun's diameter. As Mr G stood in a depression in a dip in the field he moved to higher ground and saw that inside the hole were two small round white clouds that were lit very brightly (by the rising sun?).



These drifted out of the hole and vanished behind the surrounding cloud cover after some minutes. This was evidently at lower altitude than the hole. However, in the meantime the hole had enlarged and a small greyish cloud (the only one so coloured) appeared to descend down the centre of the it and remain stationary at the bottom. When this occurred it was 07.30 and the hole had been intact ONE HOUR at least. The grey cloud remained static within the hole for many more minutes but by about 08.00 the hole was beginning to lose its round shape and become irregular. However, the single grey cloud was still there. The grey cloud appeared to be descending by 08.30 and breaking up. However, now the sky at a lower altitude than the hole had become completely overcast, thus obscuring the effect.

Mr G says; 'I suspect that it could have been some kind of weather effect but I remain puzzled.' Can anyone help solve this riddle?

CASE HISTORIES



● BIRTH OF A TIME LAPSE

This is a fascinating new case which is potentially very instructive from a number of points of view. I should stress that at this stage this is a preliminary report based on my initial contact with the witnesses. The case is now in the hands of the BUFORA Branch and NUFORC and when they report in due course we should be able to add more details.

On the evening of 21 February 1991 three youths aged 16, 17 & 18 attended a school reunion in a Buckinghamshire village. They were driving north east towards Milton Keynes at 00.45 (into 22 February) returning home when strange events overtook them.

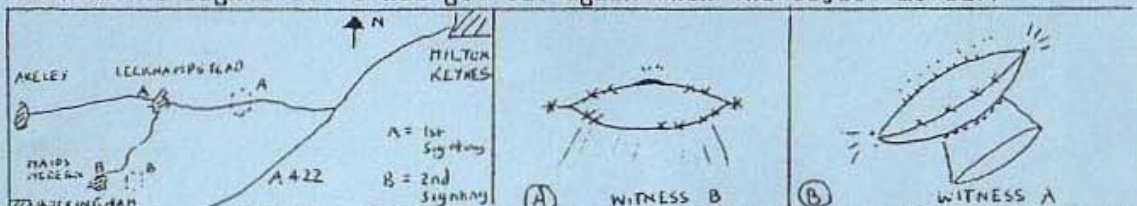
"It was a clear, cold night with a moon. Taking a short cut on a B road from Akeley through Leckhampstead to intercept the A 422 it is some 10 miles to Milton Keynes. This area is only 12 miles south of Church Stowe (scene of the Elsie Oakensen case), Little Houghton (location of several puzzling car-stop type cases - see ABDUCTION) and, indeed, only 10 miles or so north of where Peter Day took his famous movie film.

At approximately Leckhampstead A (who was in the back seat listening to a walkman personal stereo) saw something in the sky ahead of them, ie to the east. B was driving the car at 40 mph and heard his cry. The third youth, C, was dozing in the front passenger seat at this point, but awoke soon after. What A and B saw was described as 'shaped unusually cigarish, fat in the middle, luminously white, glowing with lights radiating from all angles - thousands of lights' (B) and 'a cylinder or cigar - with bright lights' (A). A searchlight beam emerged from the underside middle (B saw lots of little lights studded into the base here) and lit up trees below. It hovered over a wood about 2 miles ahead in the direction they travelled.

A slowed the car so he could have a proper look (there was no traffic on the narrow road). He also awoke C who commented that it must be an aircraft. Then it seemed to streak very fast (southwards) and disappeared. However, B, who had a better view in this direction, picked it up in a new position apparently south over the village of Maids Moreton. C by now was insisting repeatedly 'It's not a plane!' B suggested it was a star or imagination. A commented on a secret military jet. All were baffled and intrigued and decided to turn right onto another B road and drive the 4 miles towards Maids Moreton on a course heading towards the UFO.

They reached the village at about 00.59 and now saw the object much closer. It was tilted at a sharp angle to the vertical and seemed to be moving in jerks as if flitting from house to house inspecting the village. The houses were all in darkness, of course. B drove down a little lane into a field and stopped, switching the engine and lights off. They were now 500 yards from the object which was glowing brightly, hovering, still tilted. B says; 'it was bloody huge and had thousands of lights'

B and C now got out of the car. A was too frightened and remained in the back seat. They looked back at the UFO which was in the south east across the little B road and seemingly descending to a very low altitude above an adjacent field. They were all scared and fascinated by this stage, but driver B had a little more nerve. He flashed his headlights and as if in response the object started to move towards them. Panic set in and A yelled out for B to get back in (both had returned to the car before he flashed the lights but B had got out again when the object moved).



The object was now maybe 100 feet away on the other side of the road. B's one thought was to get out of the field. He tried the engine and lights but both failed to respond. The ignition did not even make a sound. He tried repeatedly for about 20 seconds but to no avail. Not even the headlights functioned now. Then a brilliant beam of light poured out of the object, just 50 feet away. This enveloped the car and B could not even see the steering wheel in front of him. A faint humming sound was also reported by two of the three witnesses but only at this point. Otherwise silence had prevailed from the object. C in the front seat tried to open the door to leap out but it was as if it were glued shut. It would not budge. One youth screamed, the others say (he denies it). In the back seat, A admits he lay flat on the seat, buried his head in his hands and closed his eyes.

Reflexively B turned the ignition again and then everything happened at once. The light beam, humming and UFO vanished instantly and the car was working. They drove out of the field as fast as possible the three miles into Buckingham. This was in the opposite direction to where they were headed but all they wanted was the nearest source of lights and other people. Here they stopped for some time to have a drink and recover.

Initially the story stopped pretty much after driving out of the field and the witnesses reported a massive time lapse. That is they reached home at 04.09 (noted on house clock) whereas it ought to have been around 01.45 given their chronology. In the past I have seen such a situation used as the springboard for regression hypnosis and an abduction to plug the gap. However, I decided to probe the question of what happened next very carefully. I am glad I did. It appears they stayed in Buckingham until about 02.00, then reached Milton Keynes at 02.30, stopped outside the police station and argued for some time about whether to report the incident. C said they would never be believed but the decision turned against because B was worried about having no insurance. At 03.00 B dropped C at home but A returned to B's house to stay the night. However, they decided to go 'UFO watching' first. A wanted to return to Maids Moreton. B vetoed that one! They reached home finally at what they estimate should have been 03.30 but was 04.09, hence (they think) still a 40 minute time lapse.

The confusion arises because ALL timings after the encounter are estimated. The two youths wearing watches say BOTH these stopped at about 01.20 (although B contradicted this by later reporting 01.10 and 34 secs)

Clearly a case that requires a great deal of follow up .Whether it will remain significant AFTER a thorough analysis only time will tell.

FINAL
WORDS

The forthcoming conference season is shaping up nicely. If you really fancy an expedition the first major international conference in Australia is being organised for the first weekend in September (more details via NUN address). Then, between 3 and 6 October comes the Belgium happening (see page 4). The weekend after, 12 October, a one-day conference on UFOs, circles and psychic phenomena will be jointly staged by SPI and SRUFO at a venue to be decided in Edinburgh... plus the usual autumn line up in the USA.

Finally, I gather that the big British conference - the three day event (16 - 17 - 18 August at the Sheffield Central Library) is already filling up. With a most impressive line up of speakers, especially from the USA and particularly strong on close encounter victims and abductees, plus Budd Hopkins and Dr Thomas Bullard as Americas two top abduction researchers, the sales were strong even before a recent major promotion for the conference excellently handled by John Spencer on BBC-1. Now, I am told, places are going fast and there is every chance of a sell out. If you don't want to miss THE conference of the year you are strongly urged to reserve your place now. Write to:- Congress 91 1 Woodhall Drive Healey Lane Batley W. Yks WF17 7SW

NB: Out before the next issue (to be reviewed then) an EXCELLENT new book edited by John Spencer - a UFO atlas. More than makes up for the slight deficiencies I felt were shown by his encyclopedia. Published 25 April.

DIARY DATES:-

29 April SRUFO meeting (all readers welcome) Mid Calder Inn (Tap Shop), Restaurant Lounge Bar, High Street, Mid Calder Scotland
BUFORA lectures :- the London Business School (Regents Pk Outer Circle 6.30)
4 May Elsie Oakensen (on being abducted) 1 June Andrew McKenzie (Ghosts)

NUFON Regional Groups

SPI	(W. Scotland)	14 McKinlay Cres, Alloa, Clackmannanshire	FK10 3RX
SRUFO	(E. Scotland)	123 Langton View, East Calder, Wst Lothian	EH53 0RE
NLUFOIG	(Cumbria)	93 Bare Lane, Morecambe, Lancashire	LA 4 6RN
HSWL	(Nth Lancs)	63 Devonshire Dr, Clayton-le-Moors, Lancs	BB 5 5RH
FUFOIG	(Fylde Coast)	293 Devonshire Rd, Blackpool, Lancashire	FY 2 0TW
MUFORA*	(Cheshire)	6 Silsden Ave, Lowton, Lancashire	WA 3 1EN
CONNECT	(Wharfedale)	33 Green Lane, Addingham, Ilkley, W. Yorks	LS29 0JH
IUN	(Yorkshire)	1 Woodhall Dr, Healey Lane, Batley, W. Yks	WF17 7SW
CUFOSC	(Shropshire)	117 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire	CW 1 2SG
SSPR	(Derbyshire)	17 Old Quarry Ave, Vales, Sheffield	S 31 8RV
SKYSCAN	(Staffs)	116 Repton Rd, Burton on Trent, Staffs	DE11 7AE
EMUFORA	(Notts)	8 Roosa Close, Bulwell, Nottingham	NG 6 7BL
PARASEARCH	(W. Midlands)	79 Sandringham Rd, Stourbridge, W. Mid	DY 8 5HL
LUF0IC	(E. Midlands)	12 Unicorn C/van, Unicorn St, Thurmaston	LE 4 8AX
MUFORC	(Northants)	46 Occupation Rd, Corby, Northants	NN17 2EF

* MUFON archive files held and accessible c/o MUFORA T:0942-604265